

Measuring the Fire Hazard of Your Rural or Forest Home

Protect your home and the surrounding forests from wildfire...

Homes located near forest areas are vulnerable to damage, or complete loss, if a wildfire should start in the area. Not only do the types of structural components affect the amount of damage that will be sustained, but the area around the home can contribute to fire risk.

For example, trees close to your home will allow a wildfire to spread to your home faster than if the area were clear. Furthermore, homes with inadequate fire protection and prevention features can often cause a wildfire to start.

Fortunately, there is a lot that you can do to make sure that your home is fire-safe. To help you measure your home's fire risk, and to enable you to determine where improvements need to be made, use the Forest Home Fire Risk form that follows. Fill out the form carefully and honestly.

First, examine your home and home-site carefully. Work through the form, assigning a Hazard Rating to each component under the sections for Structural Hazards, Site Hazards, and Hazard Reduction. Then, calculate your total Forest Home Fire Risk and check your score on the chart that follows the form.

Finally, and most importantly, try to reduce your home's fire risk by correcting the problem areas which you found.

Forest Home Fire Risk Form

| HAZARD | DESCRIPTION | HAZARD RATING |
|--|---|---------------|
| A. SITE HAZARDS | | |
| (Select one response only in sections 1 through 13) | | |
| 1. SURROUNDING TREES | | |
| *HARDWOODS (LEAFED TREES) | | |
| | If 10 trees within 9m or 30' ADD ----- | 2 |
| | If 10-20 trees within 9m or 30' ADD ----- | 3 |
| | If 20+ trees within 9m or 30' ADD ----- | 4 |
| *CONIFERS (NEEDED) | | |
| | If 10 trees within 9m or 30' ADD ----- | 3 |
| | If 10-20 trees within 9m or 30' ADD ----- | 6 |
| | If 20+ trees within 9m or 30' ADD ----- | 10 |
| *MIXEDWOOD | | |
| | If 10 trees within 9m or 30' ADD ----- | 3 |
| | If 10-20 trees within 9m or 30' ADD ----- | 4 |
| | If 20+ trees within 9m or 30' ADD ----- | 6 |
| 2. LADDER FUELS | | |
| | * Underbrush and low branches present ----- | 5 |
| 3. TYPE OF GROUND COVER (majority of type of coverage within 9m or 30') | | |
| | * Sand, Gravel, etc (Non-combustible) ----- | 0 |
| | * Grasses up to 15 cm or 6" tall ----- | 2 |
| | * Grasses 15 cm-30cm or 6"-12" ----- | 4 |
| | * Grasses greater than 30 cm or 12" ----- | 6 |
| | * Mosses ----- | 3 |
| | * Shrubs with leaves ----- | 3 |
| | with needles ----- | 4 |
| 4. FIREWOOD OR FUEL STORAGE (e.g. propane tanks, oil tanks) | | |
| | 0 to 1m, or 0 to 3' from structure ----- | 5 |
| | 1m to 9m, or 3' to 30' from structure ----- | 3 |
| | 9m+, or 30'+ from structure ----- | 1 |
| 5. BRUSH PILES | | |
| | 0 to 1m, or 0 to 3' from structure ----- | 6 |
| | 1m to 9m, or 3' to 30' from structure ----- | 3 |
| | 9m+, or 30'+ from structure ----- | 2 |
| 6. GAS CANS, PAINT, ETC. | | |
| | 0 to 1m, or 0 to 3' from structure ----- | 3 |
| | 1m to 9m, or 3' to 30' from structure ----- | 2 |
| | 9m+, or 30'+ from structure ----- | 1 |
| 7. OPEN BURNING PRACTICED ----- | | |
| 8. NO BURN BARREL/INCINERATOR | | |
| | OR NOT TO STANDARD ----- | 3 |
| 9. OUTBUILDINGS WITHIN 6m or 20' OF STRUCTURE ---- | | |
| TOTAL SITE HAZARD | | |

B. STRUCTURAL HAZARDS

10. ROOFING MATERIALS

- * Metal, tile or fiberglass ----- 0 _____
- * Asphalt shingles/ rolled roofing ----- 3 _____
- * Wood (Cedar shingles) ----- 6 _____

11. FOUNDATION

- * Open ----- 5 _____
- * Enclosed with wood sheeting ----- 3 _____
- * Enclosed (Fireproof, i.e., concrete, metal) ----- 0 _____

12. EXTERIOR WALL MATERIALS

- * Brick / Stone / Metal ----- 0 _____
- * Vinyl / Wood ----- 4 _____

13. DECKS AND OVERHANGS

- * No ----- 0 _____
- * Yes ----- 4 _____

TOTAL STRUCTURAL HAZARD

HAZARD REDUCTION

(Select all responses that apply for sections 14 through 16)

14. SITE

- * Trees pruned up to 2 m or 6' ----- 2 _____
- * Lot cleared of brush within 9 m or 30' ----- 2 _____
- * Grass kept watered and short ----- 2 _____
- * Leaves/needles raked ----- 2 _____
- * 1 m or 3' of gravel or non-flammable
material adjacent to structure ----- 1 _____

15. STRUCTURE

- * Regularly cleaned roof ----- 2 _____
- * Non-flammable skirting on decks ----- 2 _____
- * Clear of flammable material
against structure ----- 2 _____

16. OTHER

- * Useable water supply nearby ----- 1 _____
- * Fire fighting equipment
- hose, ladder, shovel ----- 1 _____
- * Communication system (phone, radio) ----- 1 _____
- * Knowledge of fire reporting number ----- 1 _____
- * Burn barrel/incinerator to standard ----- 1 _____
- * Outbuildings hazard-free ----- 2 _____

TOTAL HAZARD REDUCTION

FOREST HOME FIRE RISK CALCULATION

**TOTAL SITE HAZARD + TOTAL STRUCTURAL HAZARD - TOTAL HAZARD REDUCTION =
FOREST HOME FIRE RISK**

| | |
|--|-----------|
| TOTAL SITE HAZARD ----- | _____ |
| + TOTAL STRUCTURAL HAZARD ----- | _____ |
| - TOTAL HAZARD REDUCTION ----- | _____ |
| TOTAL FOREST HOME FIRE RISK | _____ |

Find your score on the chart that follows

HAZARD - is defined as the potential fire behavior based on physical fuel characteristics.

RISK - is defined as the probability of fire occurrence determined by the number, presence and activity of potential ignition sources.

This form is a short version of the Fire Hazard Assessment carried out by fire agencies. It covers about one-half of the hazards normally taken into account in calculating fire risk, but will provide an approximate indication of true risk. For more information on your forest home's fire risk, contact your local natural resources office or your municipal fire department.

Measuring the Fire Risk of Your Home

Can your home survive a wildfire? Interpret your score below. After you identify the problems, plan to make improvements as soon as possible. For a more complete evaluation of your home, contact your local natural resources office or fire department.

Interpreting Your Score - *Total Forest Home Fire Risk:*

- | | |
|----------|--|
| 0 to 10 | LOW FIRE RISK. The chances of your home surviving a wildfire are GOOD . You don't have to do much to improve your situation. Keep up the good work! |
| 11 to 20 | MODERATE FIRE RISK. The chances of your home surviving a wildfire are FAIR . Some minor improvements will make it even more fire resistant. Check the areas on the form in which you scored poorly. |
| 21 to 40 | HIGH FIRE RISK. The chances of your home surviving a wildfire are NOT GOOD . Improvements are necessary. Some improvements in structure and site are necessary. |
| 41 to 60 | EXTREME FIRE RISK. Your home MAY NOT SURVIVE if a wildfire passes through the area. In fact, a fire could even start on your property. Take a serious look at your property and make improvements. If you don't, you may be facing disaster. You'll find that even small changes could make the difference between losing or saving your home. |